image

ISSUE 007

THE FORGED™

RUCKA · TRAUTMANN · HENDERSON · WOODARD · MAHER

DEATH IN T-SPACE!
MORE PHOBES, MORE PHORGED!
WHAT LURKS IN THE SKULL NEBULA?

HENDERSON '23

THE FORGED™

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For centuries, all of known space has been
the realm of **Her Eternal Majesty, the Empress.**

Elite teams of soldiers, **THE FORGED**, serve Her
with fierce loyalty and total determination. Cloned from
the Empress's genetic template, these women—armed and armored with
devastating weaponry and technology—are the ultimate
extension of Imperial will.

Following a harrowing rescue mission at the edge of
known space, FORGED Team **SCIMITAR-3**—team leader **VICTORY**,
heavy weapons specialist **CRAZYJO**, combat engineer **HAP**, medic **PUSHER**,
and sharpshooter **HARPO**—found themselves on the Imperial throneworld
itself, guests of the Empress, and the focus of a conspiracy
within the government.

The team's encounter with a deadly alien species,
THE PHOBES—native to **T-SPACE**, the strange dimension that
makes interstellar transportation possible—could spell an end to the
Imperial Navy's ability to project power to the farthest stars, causing
widespread panic among Imperial citizenry and ultimately
leading to the end of Imperial rule itself.

Naturally, high-ranking officers within the military reacted predictably,
unsuccessfully attempting to kill Scimitar-3 in order to bury the secret of the
Phobes and maintain the status quo.

After surviving the intrigues of Her Majesty's Court, Vic and her
team are back in familiar territory...leading a strike into T-space and taking
the fight directly to the Phobes...

COLONIAL ZONE FG-271,
ANOMALOUS EXCLUSION ZONE JERICHO ALPHA

"THE SKULL NEBULA"
HEM 132009,
ADAMANT PURPOSE,
ON STATION

...AS PER ***ORDERS*** YOU WERE ***NOT*** TO BE ***BRIEFED*** UNTIL ADAMANT PURPOSE WAS ON STATION AND HAD RECEIVED ***GO*** FROM THE ETERNAL'S HIGH COMMAND.

OUR ***GREEN LIGHT*** WAS RECEIVED AT 0418 HOURS SHIP-TIME, AND WE ARE NOW TO COMMENCE OPERATIONS.

TACTICALLY, WE ARE ON STATION AT STABLE ANCHORAGE WITHIN DEPLOYMENT RANGE OF ANOMALOUS ZONE JERICHO ALPHA, ALSO KNOWN AS THE ***SKULL NEBULA***.

I NOW TURN THIS BRIEFING OVER TO DOCTOR LASHLEY.

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN NAGANO.

BEFORE I BEGIN, I AM GOING TO ASK ***EACH*** OF YOU FOR VERBAL CONFIRMATION OF YOUR PRESENCE.

FORGED GLADIUS-6 ALPHA...

...WARNAME ***VIPER?***

PRESENT.

FORGED RAPIER-9 ALPHA, WARNAME ***SCYTHE?***

HERE, DOCTOR.

AND FORGED SCIMITAR-3 ALPHA, WARNAME ***VICTORY?***

SCIMITAR-3 ALPHA?

VIC.

VIC.

YES.

PRESENT.

EXCELLENT.

PLEASE PAY ATTENTION.

AS YOU NOW KNOW, TWENTY-NINE STANDARD DAYS AGO, THE EMPIRE MADE ***FIRST CONTACT*** WITH SENTIENT ALIEN LIFE.

CONTACT OCCURRED AT THE DECOMMISSIONED AL-ASHANTI TERRAFORMING FACILITY ON GEHENNA D-54-C, IN THE ACHERON REACH.

CONTACT WAS MADE BY FORGED TEAM SCIMITAR-3 ALPHA, WHO WE HAVE TO THANK FOR THESE IMAGES, COURTESY OF THEIR ARMOR-CAMS.

"CONTRARY TO TEN THOUSAND YEARS OF IMPERIAL EXPANSION AND EXPECTATION, THESE ALIENS WERE ***NOT*** FROM GEHENNA NOR, TECHNICALLY, FROM WITHIN OUR ***GALAXY.***

"INSTEAD, IT APPEARS THAT THEY ARE FROM ***T-SPACE*** ITSELF, MAKING THEM EXTRA-***DIMENSIONAL*** BEINGS.

"THEY ARE COLLECTIVELY BEING REFERRED TO AS ***PHOBES...***"

...AND THEY HAVE DECLARED THEIR *INTENTION* AS *HOSTILE.*

YOU OKAY, VIC?

YEAH, JUST... BEEN GETTING THESE HEADACHES SINCE WE GOT OUT HERE.

GIVEN THE ENEMY'S ABILITY TO *TRAVERSE* T-SPACE *AT WILL*, THE THREAT TO THE ETERNAL EMPIRE *CANNOT* BE OVERSTATED...

FUCKING SHUT *UP*, WOULD YOU?

I'M TRYING TO *LISTEN.*

...AND RISKS *DESTROYING* THE *FASTER-THAN-LIGHT* NETWORK UPON WHICH THE EMPIRE *RELIES.*

FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING, I GUESS.

FUCK YOU, BITCH.

EFFECTIVELY, WE ARE FACING AN ENEMY WHO CAN *ATTACK* AT *ANY TIME*, AND AT *ANY POINT* THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE.

WHY THEY HAVE *NOT* AS YET NO ONE CAN *SAY*--THEY MAY BE GATHERING *FORCES* FOR COORDINATED, DISPARATE *STRIKES*, FOR INSTANCE--BUT THUS *FAR*, WE HAVE BEEN *LUCKY.*

WE CANNOT AFFORD TO WAIT UNTIL OUR LUCK RUNS *OUT.*

WE MUST TAKE THE FIGHT TO THE ENEMY.

THAT IS WHY YOUR THREE TEAMS ARE *HERE...*

ADVANCE IMPERIAL RESEARCH SCIENCE HAS DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING ***PROTOTYPE.***

IT IS A MODULAR COMPONENT DESIGNED TO BE INTEGRATED INTO YOUR R7-O-O-A ARMOR UPGRADES TO ALLOW THE FORGED TO ENTER, MANEUVER, AND FIGHT IN T-SPACE.

YOUR MISSION IS ***THREEFOLD,*** EACH STAGE CONTINGENT UPON THE ***SUCCESS*** OF THE PRIOR.

STAGE ONE WILL TEST THE DEVICE ON THE THREE SCOUT-SNIPERS FROM YOUR UNITS, FG6-GAMMA, WARNAME ***STRIKER...***

FR9-GAMMA, WARNAME ***HEADSHOT...***

...AND FS3-GAMMA, WARNAME ***HARPO.***

THEIR ***INITIAL*** OBJECTIVE WILL BE TO DETERMINE THE EFFICACY OF THE UNIT.

THEIR ***SECOND*** OBJECTIVE IS RECON AND INTEL, TO CONFIRM THE PRESENCE OF THE PHOBES IN THIS THEATRE.

THEY WILL THEN EXIT T-SPACE TO SHARE THEIR RESULTS AND FINDINGS, WHEREUPON THE OPERATION WILL MOVE TO STAGE TWO.

ANY QUESTIONS?

SEEMS PRETTY STRAIGHT--

WHY *HERE*, DOCTOR LASHLEY?

IF THEY CAN *ATTACK* FROM ANYWHERE, THEY COULD *BE* ANYWHERE, COULDN'T THEY?

IF YOU'LL ALLOW ME, DOCTOR.

ADAMANT PURPOSE IS ALSO TESTING A NEW *SENSOR PACKAGE*, VIC.

LASHLEY CAN EXPLAIN THE *TECH*, BUT QUICK VERSION IS WE'RE READING A *LOT* OF PHOBE ACTIVITY--OR AT LEAST WHAT WE *THINK* IS PHOBE ACTIVITY--WITHIN THE DIMENSIONAL ENVELOPE OF THE NEBULA.

SO WE'RE SENDING OUR THREE INTO A POTENTIAL PHOBE HOTZONE WITH *UNTESTED* TECH AND *NO* BACKUP?

I'M NOT IN LOVE WITH THAT, CAPTAIN.

YOU DON'T *HAVE* TO LOVE IT, YOU HAVE TO FUCKING *DO* IT, FORGED.

I WOULDN'T EXPECT YOU TO BE.

IT IS LESS THAN IDEAL. IT IS ALSO WHAT MUST BE DONE.

YOU ARE *DISMISSED*. PLEASE BRIEF YOUR SCOUT-SNIPERS AND BEGIN MODIFICATIONS ON THEIR ARMOR...

"...THEY WILL DEPLOY IN SIX HOURS..."

SIX HOURS OF PREP BEFORE THIS SHITSHOW GOES HOT?

WE NEED SIX MORE ***WEEKS*** FOR THE NEW ARMOR ALONE.

IF YOU'D FOUGHT THE FUCKERS WE'RE LOOKING FOR? YOU'D WANT MORE THAN ***THAT,*** SCYTHE.

NO, VIC. STOP.

YOU'LL SCARE THE CHILDREN WITH ALL THE SPOOKY MONSTER TALK.

YOU GOT SOMETHING YOU WANT TO SAY TO ME, VIPER?

ME? OFFER COMMENTARY TO THE EMPRESS'S NEW FAVORITE TOY?

BECAUSE SHE MAYBE SAW A ***BIG SCARY BUG*** SOMEWHERE ONCE?

HEAVENS FORBID.

GO AHEAD. SAY YOUR PIECE.

WORD GETS AROUND, VIC, AND WORD IS, YOU AND YOUR TEAM ARE ***GOOD.*** BUT I'VE SEEN YOU WITH THEM, AND YOU DON'T EVEN TRY TO ***HIDE*** IT:

YOU ***LOVE*** THEM.

THAT MAKES YOU ***SENTIMENTAL.*** OUT HERE, SENTIMENTAL SPELLS ***SOFT,*** AND SOFT SPELLS ***DEATH.***

BUT WORST OF ALL, IT SPELLS ***MISSION FAILURE.***

I'M SURPRISED, VIPER.

I NEVER WOULD'VE GUESSED, NOT IN THE EMPRESS'S LIFETIME, YOU COULD ***SPELL.***

JOKE IF YOU WANT, BUT IT WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING. WE'RE ***NOT*** SISTERS. WE'RE NOT EVEN ***PEOPLE.***

WE'RE A WEAPONS SYSTEM. CARING ABOUT ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE MISSION IS NOT FOR ***US.***

SQUARE THAT SHIT AWAY, VIC. BECAUSE THE CLOCK'S RUNNING AND WE'VE GOT ***A JOB*** TO DO.

...WOW.

I WOULDN'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY. VIPER'S JUST A COLD-HEARTED, RELENTLESS, SOUL-DEVOURING BITCH FROM HELL.

WELL, HELL, SCYTHE. AIN'T WE ALL?

AND AS MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT...

"...VIPER'S RIGHT. WE'RE ON THE CLOCK."

ALPHAS ON THE DECK! STAND AT ATTENTION!

STAND EASY.

FORGED! SITREP!

THE NEW SUIT TECH IS SHOWING GREEN ACROSS THE BOARD.

THE TECHS HAVE SOME CONCERNS ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ***SEALS***, LIFE SUPPORT FUNCTION, AND, YOU KNOW, ***SURVIVING*** THE FIRST SORTIE.

ALL PART OF THE JOB, HEADSHOT.

I'M MORE NERVOUS ABOUT EXFIL. STILL NOT SURE HOW THIS GEAR WORKS.

THE SYSTEM'S CALLED ***RIPCORD***, AND THAT'S HOW YOU SHOULD THINK OF IT.

THERE'LL BE JUST ENOUGH RESIDUAL ENERGY FROM INSERTION THAT, WHEN IT'S DUMPED ALL AT ONCE, YOU POP BACK INTO NORMAL SPACE.

THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO DO IT ***TOGETHER***. OTHERWISE THE SPLASH WILL ***COOK*** THE TROOPER ***NEXT*** TO ***YOU***.

THAT ALL SOUNDS... ***UN***IDEAL, STRIKER.

YOU'LL BE FINE, FORGED. "THE EMPRESS SHALL PROVIDE."

DID...DID SHE JUST QUOTE A ***FIELD MANUAL*** TO US?

I BELIEVE SHE DID.

VIPER'S GIRLS SURE KNOW HOW TO HAVE FUN.

FUCK'S SAKE, MY ***SPOTTERBOT*** HAS ***BETTER*** PATTER.

SPEAKING OF PATTER, YOUR GIRL IS QUITE THE TALKER. WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?

YOU GET USED TO IT. IT'S SOOTHING, LIKE WHITE NOISE.

BETTER FINISH YOUR PREP. LAUNCH ALERT'LL BE COMING IN A FEW HOURS.

GONNA ROUND UP THE REST OF MY MOB. NOT MUCH FOR THEM TO DO YET EXCEPT GET INTO TROUBLE RIGHT NOW.

YOURS HAVE THAT KNACK, TOO?

GOTTA LOVE 'EM. NO MATTER WHAT VIPER SAYS.

LOOK LIVELY ON DECK, FORGED. ALPHA COMING UP! HIDE YOUR PORN!

THAT'S HER? THE GIRL I...AH, *MET*, BACK IN THE BARRACKS ON THE CASTRA?

SPOTTER RELAY: HER NAME IS WARRANT OFFICER RILEY CAMMINO.

SHE'S PRETTY.

SPOTTER RELAY: *I* THINK SO.

YOU MET THE OTHER SHOOTERS, YEAH? HEADSHOT AND STRIKER?

THEY ANY GOOD?

SCYTHE AND HER TEAM SEEM PRETTY SQUARED AWAY.

VIPER'S TOUGH AS HELL AND KNOWS HER STUFF, BUT...

...YEAH, SHE'S GOT ALL THE CHARM OF A SHUTTLE CRASH.

SPOTTER RELAY: FS3-GAMMA, WARNAME *HARPO.*

REPORTING FOR FUCKING DUTY, BOSS. I'M READY.

YEAH. YEAH, YOU *FUCKING* ARE.

THRONEWORLD
RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
"EMPYREAN HEIGHTS"

ZEEET

WEET

PING

SCREENING: COMPLETE.

APPROVED.

GOOD EVENING, GENERAL.

EVENING, INGE.

ENJOY YOUR EVENING, GENERAL.

MHM.

WELCOME HOME, GENERAL DAVIAN…

THANK YOU, HOUSE.

…YOUR *GUEST* HAS *REFRESHMENT* WAITING.

BOURBON'S YOUR DRINK, ISN'T IT, DAVIAN?

I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF POURING YOU ONE.

I GOT INTO THE AREF BRANDY FOR MYSELF, I HOPE YOU DON'T ***MIND.***

I WAS SAVING THAT AREF FOR A ***SPECIAL OCCASION.***

AND I DON'T ***QUALIFY?***

REMAINS TO BE SEEN, I THINK.

OUT OF CURIOSITY, I'M ***ASSUMING*** YOU ***MINDWITCHED*** YOUR WAY PAST ALL THE ***PERSONNEL*** TO GET IN HERE...

...BUT HOW'D YOU CIRCUMVENT ALL OF THE ***SCANS*** AND ***BOTS?***

YOU DON'T REALLY ***CARE*** ABOUT THAT, GENERAL, DO YOU?

IT'S ***ACADEMIC*** CURIOSITY, BUT NO, THE ***HOW*** YOU GOT IN HERE MATTERS ***LESS*** THAN THE ***WHY.***

FOR A CASSANDRA, YOU SEEM TO MOVE AROUND WITH AN ***AWFUL*** LOT OF ***FREEDOM,*** MY LADY...

...UNLESS HER ETERNAL MAJESTY *SENT* YOU HERE.

SHE DID NOT.

IT WAS TIME YOU AND I *TALKED*, GENERAL, CONSIDERING HOW YOUR *PARANOID FUMBLING* HAS NEARLY JEOPARDIZED *EVERYTHING.*

THAT'S VERY INTERESTING, MY LADY.

HOW'S THE KOAN GO? WHAT *MUST* HAPPEN *WILL* HAPPEN?

THAT WHICH MUST HAPPEN *MUST* HAPPEN.

THAT'S IT.

I PRESUME YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE ILL-ADVISED AND *FAILED* ATTEMPTS ON THE LIVES OF *FORGED SCIMITAR-3.*

CLEARLY THEIR DEATHS WERE *NOT* MEANT TO *HAPPEN...*

...SO *WHY* DOES IT *CONCERN* YOU?

UNLESS, OF COURSE, WE'RE AT THE *INTERSECTION* OF *COMPETING FUTURES.*

AND UNLESS *YOU* HAVE A *VESTED* INTEREST IN ONE OF THOSE *OUTCOMES.*

YOU PROCEED FROM A ***FALSE*** PREMISE, GENERAL.

OH, I DON'T THINK I DO, MY LADY.

NO, THAT IS ***NOT*** WHAT I MEAN...

...YOU ARE ***VERY*** INTELLIGENT, I WOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO ***DISABUSE*** YOU OF YOUR ***CONCLUSION.***

RATHER, THIS CONVERSATION IS ***WRIT.*** IT HAS ***ALREADY HAPPENED,*** GENERAL DAVIAN.

ITS ***CONCLUSION*** IS ***FOREGONE.***

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, LADY, I ***WILL*** MAKE UP MY ***OWN MIND.***

OF COURSE YOU SHALL. AND IT WILL BE IN ***ACCORDANCE*** WITH MINE.

"MINE."

NOT "OURS"?

HER ETERNAL MAJESTY WILL SUMMON YOU TO **WAR COUNCIL** IN ONE MINUTE AND FOUR SECONDS.

ITS PURPOSE WILL BE TO **MONITOR** THE INITIAL **INSERTION** OF THE SCOUT-SNIPER TEAMS INTO T-SPACE.

IT IS THE **SECOND** INSERTION THAT IS OF CONCERN.

IT IS THE **SECOND** INSERTION THAT CONCERNS **VICTORY.**

CONCERNS IN WHAT WAY?

SHE MUST LIVE.

AND I MUST **GO.**

I WILL SEE YOU AT THE COUNCIL, GENERAL.

=DEET= GENERAL DAVIAN, NEW MESSAGE: URGENT.

YOU ARE SUMMONED IMMEDIATELY TO HER ETERNAL MAJESTY'S PRESENCE FOR COUNCIL...

FORGED SORTIE ALPHA 1, MOVE INTO LAUNCH POSITION.

FG6-GAMMA, ACKNOWLEDGED.

FR9-GAMMA, HEADSHOT, COMPLYING.

HEY, HARPO?

MAYBE LET SOMEONE GET A WORD IN, YEAH?

ADAMANT PURPOSE SHOWS TELEMETRY IN THE GREEN. ALL MISSION UNITS SHOW READY FOR POWER-UP.

STAND BY.

ADAMANT PURPOSE REGRETS TO INFORM YOU: THIS IS GOING TO **SUCK**, LADIES.

T-SPACE BREACH IN THREE...

TWO...

ONE.

HIT IT.

NNNNGH

OW

SHIP JOCKEY WAS RIGHT. THIS AIN'T FUN.

!

TOUGH IT OUT, HEADSHOT. ARM UP, EVERYONE. WE'VE GOT A JOB TO DO.

SPOTTER SYSTEM ACTIVE. RELAY:

NAVIGATIONAL DATA USELESS. E.V.I.L. IS NON-RESPONSIVE.

WARNING: SEVERE ENERGY AND GRAVITIC ANOMALIES DETECTED...

...SUGGEST CAUTION.

FWWWAAAAAAM

FUCK FUCK FUCK

I'M ALWAYS CAUTIOUS, SPOTTER.

WE CAN HANDLE THIS...

FWUUUAAAMM

NNNGAH

TARGETS ON DIVERGENT VECTORS. TEN SECONDS UNTIL LOSS OF CONTACT.

CONTACT.

REACQUIRING.

PROXIMITY ALERT. DECELERATE.

HANG ON, STRIKE...

...GOTCHA.

HOLY FUCK THAT WAS CLOSE

WE AREN'T GOING TO GET ANYWHERE FIGHTING THESE ENERGY CURRENTS.

SPOTTER RELAY: THEN WHY FIGHT THEM? LET'S SEE WHERE THEY TAKE US.

WHY THE HELL NOT?

IT'S NOT LIKE ANY OF US IS GOING TO HIT RETIREMENT AGE.

MASS SHADOW DETECTED. DECELERATE. DECELERATE.

WHERE THE HELL DID THAT MASS COME FROM?

IF IT WAS A SHIP TRANSITIONING, WE'D BE ***SPLATTERED*** ACROSS THE HULL BY NOW.

SPOTTER RELAY: IF I HAD TO GUESS...

…THAT.

WHAT THE SUPPURATING FUCK IS *THAT?*

HOW ABOUT "A METRIC SHIT-TON OF BAD NEWS" FOR STARTERS?

ALERT! HOSTILE ENERGY FORMS DETECTED.

HEADSHOT! ENEMY CONTACT ON YOUR FLANK!

HEADSHOT'S HIT! HEADSHOT'S HIT!

NNNNNGAH

HFFFFFUCK!

ALERT: NEGATIVE WEAPON EFFECT.

FR9-GAMMA HAS LOST CONSCIOUSNESS.

WARNING: ADDITIONAL CONTACTS INCOMING.

RELAY FROM FS3-GAMMA: STRIKER, I HAVE HEADSHOT. GRAB HOLD NOW!

ROGER, HARPO!

RIPCORD *ACTIVATION* IN THREE....

...TWO...

...ONE...

...VENTING...

...WH...

...WHAT'D I MISS...?

...DEFINITELY A *REAL-SPACE* STRUCTURE BUILT BY THE ENEMY...

...SOMEHOW MAINTAINING DIMENSIONAL COHERENCE WITHIN T-SPACE.

HOW AND WHY THE ENEMY WOULD CREATE, LET ALONE MAINTAIN SUCH AN OBJECT IS, AT THIS TIME, UNDETERMINED.

TECHNION ANALYSIS OF DATA AND TELEMETRY RECOVERED BY THE INSERTION TEAM CONTINUES, BUT I BELIEVE IT SHALL PROVE INCONCLUSIVE.

AND *WHY* IS THAT, BRAY VII?

THE DATA IS INSUFFICIENT, ETERNAL.

YOU'RE THE CORPOREAL LEADER OF THE ORDER OF TECHNIOUS, BRAY.

SURELY YOU CAN AT LEAST OFFER SOME *SPECULATION?*

IT IS NOT WITHIN THE DOCTRINE TO SPECULATE.

OH, *PRETTY PLEASE,* BRAY!

IF NOT SPECULATION THEN *THEORIZE* AND *INDULGE* THE ARCH-GENERAL'S *CURIOSITY!*

AS YOU WISH...

...I OFFER TWO THEORIES.

INITIAL OBSERVATION DETECTED *ENERGY READINGS* CONSISTENT WITH IMPERIAL T-ENGINE EMANATIONS.

THEORY: IT IS A *SHIP* OF SOME KIND, THOUGH TO WHAT PURPOSE IS UNKNOWN...

...GIVEN THAT THE ENEMY HAS THE *APPARENT* ABILITY TO SHIFT BETWEEN THEIR DIMENSION AND OURS WITHOUT TECHNOLOGICAL MEANS.

THEORY: IT IS A *WEAPON.*

IF THEY'RE CONSTRUCTING A *WEAPON*...

...AND THEY CAN EXIT T-SPACE AT *ANY* POINT THEY *DESIRE*...

...THEY COULD *DELIVER* IT *ANYWHERE*...

...EVEN HERE.

I REITERATE...

...MORE DATA IS REQUIRED TO REFINE *EITHER* THEORY.

WELL THEN WE SHOULD *GET* IT, SHOULDN'T WE? *YES*, WE SHOULD!

DATA DATA DATA *DATA*--

--SURELY THERE IS *SOMEONE* WHO CAN GET OUR DEAR BRAY VII THE *DATA* THEY SO *DESPERATELY* REQUIRE!

WHO CAN IT BE? OH, *WHO* WILL GET US THIS CHEWY LITTLE NUGGET OF *EMPIRE-PRESERVING* INFORMATION?

THREE TEAMS OF YOUR FORGED REMAIN IN POSITION, MY ETERNAL--

OH, *YES!* SO THEY *DO!*

WELL SEND ONE IN BY ALL MEANS!

THEY CAN GATHER SAMPLES, SNIFF THE FLOWERS, TASTE THE TREES, WHATEVER...

...JUST MAKE *SURE* THEY GET THAT *DATA*, I MEAN, HOW *HARD* CAN IT BE?

THUS I COMMAND YOU, ARCH-GENERAL MITTIN-YUR, TO MAKE IT SO.

IT WILL BE DONE, ETERNAL.

...FROM COMMAND, DIRECT FROM ARCH-GENERAL MITTIN-YUR, AS FOLLOWS:

"YOU ARE HEREBY ORDERED TO EXECUTE A SECOND RECON INSERTION IMMEDIATELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING CAPABILITY AND PURPOSE OF PHOBE STRUCTURE.

"REQUIRE FULL PACKET OVERVIEW, INCLUSIVE STRUCTURAL, BIO, TACTICAL."

WHICH MEANS THIS IS A ***SINGLE-TEAM*** INSERTION, FULL-SQUAD, ***NOT*** JUST THE SCOUTS.

AND UNLESS THE PHOBES ARE FUCKING ***DUMB***, THEY'RE GOING TO BE ***WAITING***, BECAUSE THEY'VE ALREADY BEEN ***ALERTED*** TO OUR PRESENCE.

SO WHOEVER ***GOES***, THEY GO IN ***HOT***.

CAPTAIN NAGANO, MY TEAM STANDS ***READY*** TO DEPLOY AT YOUR WORD.

AS I EXPECT ***ALL*** YOUR TEAMS TO BE, VIPER.

THAT SAID...

...VICTORY, SCIMITAR-3 WILL DEPLOY IN ***ONE HOUR***.

UNDERSTOOD.

WHAT YOU DOIN'?

YOU MESSIN' WITH YOUR *GYROS?*

HEY, CRASH.

YEAH, TARGETING WENT TO *SHIT* ON THE *LAST* INSERTION AND E.V.I.L. IS EVEN *MORE* USELESS THAN USUAL, SO FIGURED I'D FLIP THE HEP LAUNCHERS TO *MANUAL.*

IT'LL BE PURE *EYEBALLING*, BUT IT'D BE NICE TO HAVE AT LEAST *SOME* ORDNANCE TO PUT ON *TARGET*, YOU KNOW?

WELL, WORSE COMES TO WORST, YOU CAN ALWAYS BEAT ON 'EM WITH YOUR FISTS.

DON'T THREATEN ME WITH A GOOD TIME, BABY.

I'D FUCKING RIP 'EM IN *TWO...*

PAIN

...AND *EAT* WHAT'S LEFT.

PAIN

SO HOW YOU BYPASSING THE CIRCUIT, THEN?

I'M JUST FUCKIN' PULLING THE WHOLE DAMN *CARD*, CRASH...

...EASIER THAT WAY....

PUSH.

HEY, BOSS. I'LL BE ALL SET TO ROLL IN--

I NEED YOU TO GIMME A *LOOK*, PUSH.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

I DUNNO. BEEN GETTING THESE...

...LIKE HEADACHES, THEY COME AND GO. STARTED 'BOUT THE TIME WE CAME ON STATION.

DISCREETLY, PLEASE, PUSHER.

ALWAYS, BOSS.

...

...HUH...

...HMM...

"HUH HMM" *WHAT?*
NOTHING.
NOTHING?
NOTHING.
YOUR SEROTONIN LEVELS ARE A LITTLE OFF. CORTISOL IS UP. LOT OF ACTIVITY IN THE TEMPORAL LOBE...
...ALL OF IT CONSISTENT WITH *STRESS.*
ANY REASON YOU'D BE UNDER CONSIDERABLE STRESS AT THIS TIME, BOSS?
YOU'RE A SMART-ASS, PUSHER.
AND YOU LOVE ME FOR IT.
YOU WANT, I CAN GIVE YOU AN ANALGESIC, MIGHT HELP?
NAH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
TIME WE GOT TO WORK.

ADAMANT PURPOSE, SCIMITAR-3 ALPHA.

WE ARE **CHARGED** AND **READY** FOR INSERTION ON YOUR MARK.

YOU ARE CLEAR FOR INSERTION, SCIMITAR-3...

...VICTORY TO THE EMPIRE.

FUCK ME THAT SUCKED.

YOU SAID IT, HARPO.

CUT THE CHATTER.

JO, HARPO, OVERWATCH.

HAP AND PUSHER, YOU'RE WITH ME...

...LET'S GET IN AND OUT BEFORE THEY KNOW WE'RE HERE.

ROGER THAT, BOSS.

ALERT: HOSTILES INCOMING.

YEAH, UH, BOSS...

...THEY KNOW WE'RE HERE!

CLOSE IT UP!

PUSHER, HAP, IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO **SCIENCE**, DO IT **NOW** AND DO IT **FAST!**

ON IT!

UNDERSTOOD.

HARPO, JO--

--DO WHAT YOU CAN TO SLOW THEM DOWN!

FUCKING HOW?!

LADIES! WE ARE OUT OF TIME!

FORM ON ME FOR RIPCORD!

GOT MY SAMPLES, CONFIRMED!

JUST FINISHING UP!

CONTACT CONTACT CONTACT--

--GGGGGAAAA--

--AAAHHH?

NO FUCKIN' CLUE--

...THEY MISSED US, VIC, THEY'RE COMING STRAIGHT FOR YOU!

JO, HARPO, FULL BURN NOW!

CONVERGE FONNGHHH--

--HNNF FUCK MY HEAD MY HEAD--

EN ROUTE.

COMING!

IN POSITION--

VIC!

VICTORY!

LET ME GO LEGGO WE GOTTA GET HER--

JO! STOP IT!

ALERT:

THEY ARE COMING BACK.

SHE'S GONE, JO--

--SHE'S FUCKING GONE WE GOTTA GO TOO!

YOU'RE IN CHARGE NOW--

--YOU GOTTA GIVE THE ORDER!

I'M SORRY BOSS.

PULL IT.

COLONIAL ZONE FG-271

PARTIAL VIEW: ANOMALOUS ZONE JERICHO ALPHA
IMPERIAL MINISTRY OF NAVIGATION SAFETY AND SECURITY
MAP FILE: 743847765.3882373

[A] INCIDENT 641.B
Vidara II
Class 4 Freigher
REGISTRY: ICV 1627101-D
MISSING/LOST

[B] INCIDENT 734/9-D
Merlin's Omnibus
Scouting Legion Survey Vessel
REGISTRY: ISL 44-Delta
PRESUMED LOST

[C] INCIDENT 5902.00-A
Empress's Luck
Civilian Star Yacht
REGISTRY: ICV 8290383
MISSING/LOST

[D] INCIDENT 22-44-H
Voca's Poem
Civilian Transport
REGISTRY: [REDACTED]
DERELICT

[E] INCIDENT 82736-V
Longhauler's Lament
Class 2 Ore Freighter
REGISTRY: ICV 6271.291-H
ABANDONED/ALL HANDS LOST

[F] INCIDENT C-0193-G_4
Hopalong
Civilian Racing Pinnace
REGISTRY: ICV 001928-D4
MISSING/LOST

[G] INCIDENT 7346-X41
Forever Stalwart
Imperial Navy Patrol Vessel
REGISTRY: HEM 22410-D
DESTROYED

ASTRONOMICAL FEATURE "THE SKULL NEBULA"

SECURITY AND NAVIGATION HAZARD BRIEFING

Office of the Minister of Navigation Safety and Security

CLASSIFIED MATERIAL

BLACK HELIX SECURITY PROTOCOLS IN EFFECT

UNAUTHORIZED POSSESSION OR REVIEW PUNISHABLE BY SUMMARY EXECUTION

DATE: 11 FIRSTMONTH, 7,124

Per the edict of Her Eternal Majesty, this office has prepared a report on Colonial Zone FG-271, the so-called “Anomalous Zone” Jericho Alpha.

In summary, it is unclear what created the unusual conditions unique to the Zone, despite centuries of study. The most reasonable theory is that some manner of disruption occurred within Transit Space (“T-space”), an energy discharge of sufficient magnitude that its effects have caused bleed-over into normal space.

What is known is that a multi-sector region is plagued by all manner of unusual gravimetric distortions, magnetic storms, and other such effects—likely magnified by the presence of Astronomical Feature 404-V-Bravo, the “Skull Nebula.” (One unusual theory involving the Arkinreit Mission seems unlikely but persists. This office finds the underlying assumptions flawed and over-reliant on coincidence, but it is included here in the interest of full disclosure. See appended document T41.01.)

It is highly advised that this region remain quarantined to civilian and general military traffic, as the number of vessels lost is noteworthy. (See appended file G-672172.1 for a summary of ships that have reported loss of navigational reliability in the area and were subsequently lost with all hands.)

cc: Admiralty
Imperial Science Advisory Council
Imperial Bureau of Data Collection and Analysis
Her Majesty, the Eternal Empress

CLASSIFIED BLACK HELIX CODEWORD: STRAYSIGNAL

File T41.01

Subject: Arkinreit Expeditionary Missions

Prepared by: Imperial Archives

CLASSIFIED BLACK HELD
REDEWORD: STRAYSIGNA

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

WARNING: Much of the information contained herein was culled from the deep archives dating back to Early Empire, and the integrity of the material has been compromised by the effects of age and compatibility loss with subsequently developed technology.

SUMMARY: Dr. Venatos Arkinreit is considered a pioneer in early T-space travel, notably in the fields of cross-dimensional transit and comparative astronavigation. After the discovery and implementation of working Transit Space drives, determining how to navigate through T-space with accuracy was problematic. T-space jumps were notoriously inaccurate and occasionally random. Brave pilots and navigators often found themselves quite distant from their intended destinations. Normal navigational hazards such as pulsars further complicated matters, and it is estimated that one in twenty ships were damaged or destroyed during jumps.

Arkinreit proposed a methodology of determining reliable pathways through T-space in which a form of quantum tethering—connecting locations through T-space to congruent locations in normal space—was possible. Furthermore, Arkinreit's math suggested that quantum-level T-space data contained within it the positioning in both normal space and Transit Space; therefore, Arkinreit proposed, successfully accurately calibrating locations in both dimensions would create an inherent map to the entirety of T-space.

Per Royal commission, Arkinreit commanded a fleet of Scout Legion vessels, initiating a T-space trip to Paragon Station (well within Imperial borders at the time). On 17 Thirdmonth, 4,219, Arkinreit's exploratory mission launched, and was the first use of a newly designed navigational computer.

It was subsequently determined that Arkinreit's theory, while sound, contained mathematical errors. The Arkinreit Mission was believed lost during the initial test. Instead of arriving at Paragon Station, a signal received from what was at the time a largely unexplored region of the Empire (now catalogued as FG-271) three years later revealed that Arkinreit and his team had survived their T-space journey and used the data collected during the mission to uncover the underlying errors in his initial calculations.

As of this writing, the revised Arkinreit formulae remain the underpinnings of Imperial navigational systems, allowing for nearly pinpoint travel across the vastness of our expanding Empire. Sadly, Arkinreit himself perished in an autocoach crash on Vespus II shortly before he was to be rewarded for his accomplishments by Her Almighty Glory, the Empress. Such are the cruel vagaries of fate, it seems. Nevertheless, his devoted service to the Empire remains clear.

Despite his scientific triumphs, rumors swirled around Arkinreit's demise; spotty records from within the deeper archives hint at pirate broadcasts originating from the inner Fortress Worlds, broadcasts decrying a shadowy conspiracy—that Arkinreit's commission explicitly demanded he arrive in the Skull Nebula, not Paragon Station, and that the navigational hazards in the region were the result of a great battle within T-space. Without access to intelligence records

of the period, it is impossible to determine what, if any, investigations were conducted or what the results of such probes might have been.

As stated, this office finds the conspiracy notions to be specious and unlikely.

RECOMMENDATION: This region of space is clearly hazardous and should remain off-limits to civilian traffic. Limited military use of the sector should continue, but forays within the Anomalous Zone should require Admiralty permission.

Further, this office recommends the establishment of three monitoring and research stations to continue observation of the region and as resupply depots for outbound Naval vessels.

FILE ENDS

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL ATTACHED

22.129
CLASSIFIED BLACK HELIX
CODEWORD: STRAYSIGNAL

File: G-672172.1

Public Document / No Restrictions

MINISTRY OF NAVIGATION SAFETY AND SECURITY ARCHIVAL DATA

Historical Record: Lost Ships [Partial Listing]

Location: Colonial Zone FG-271, Anomalous Zone Jericho Alpha

INCIDENT 641.B

Vidara II (Class 4 Freighter)

Registry: ICV 1627101-D

Deviated from intended destination of Oma Kurz. Navigator reported magnetic interference to main navigation computer before contact lost. Ship declared lost 05 Twomonth, 6,871.

INCIDENT 734/9-D

Merlin's Omnibus (Scouting Legion Survey Vessel)

Registry: ISL 44-Delta

Long-haul scouting mission. Vessel never returned. Declared lost/destroyed 25 Twelvemonth, 6,872.

INCIDENT 5902.00-A

Empress's Luck (Civilian Star Yacht)

Registry: ICV 8290383

Registered course-plot indicated a property survey across Colonial Zone TLG-43-D. Distress call indicated an unanticipated T-space transition after the wake of a rogue comet triggered her engines. Subsequent signals from the Anomalous Zone and the discovery of wreckage indicated *Empress's Luck* was destroyed and all hands lost.

INCIDENT 22-44-H

Voca's Poem (Civilian Vessel)

Registry: [redacted]

Records of *Voca's Poem* appear to be heavily altered and include a forged engine signature. *Voca's Poem* is deemed to be a possible intelligence asset or criminal operator. Located at the periphery of the Jericho Alpha Anomalous Zone (14 Elevenmonth 7,214). Ship intact, but no crew or passengers aboard. A review of ship's logs revealed all recorded data on the ship was corrupted and resembled static-flecked screaming.

INCIDENT 82736-V

Longhauler's Lament (Class 2 Ore Freighter)

Registry: ICV 6271.291-H

Navigational miscalculation burned ship's fuel stores beyond capacity. Ship abandoned. Crew beacons were never located, all hands logged as lost (01 Firstmonth 8,141).

INCIDENT C-0193-G_4

Hopalong (Civilian Racing Pinnace)

Registry: ICV 001928-D4

Civilian racing vessel, participating in the Outer Systems Long Distance Imperial Regatta, 8,942. Approximately midway through the regatta, ship's captain broadcast several cryptic transmissions (referencing "teeth in the stars") before plunging into the heart of the Skull Nebula. Declared lost/destroyed 09 Thirdmonth, 8,942.

INCIDENT 7346-X41

Forever Stalwart (Imperial Naval Vessel)

Registry: HEM 22410-D

Imperial Patrol Frigate *Forever Stalwart* reported a series of crew incidents (sporadic fights among personnel), medical incidents (insomnia, aphasia), and mechanical and navigational failures while on routine patrol cruise along periphery of Anomalous Zone Jericho Alpha (Fivemonth, 10,921).

Final distress signal received 21 Fivemonth; rescue ships dispatched. A signal buoy indicating a sudden acceleration into an unregistered asteroid (killing the crew) was located at the *Forever Stalwart*'s last known coordinates.

IMPERIAL BUREAU OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

FROM: Major Lyra Osempi (Office of Operational Planning and Logistics)
TO: Head of Station 0000 (General D[redacted])

General:

This is to advise you that, per your office's instructions, we have quietly intervened with the Department of Naval Personnel in order to facilitate deployment of **FORGED SCIMITAR-3** (in re: **OPERATION: ABADDON**).

All digital records of FS3's relocation to the Jericho Alpha (Colonial Zone FG-271) theatre of operations have been altered or removed per standard protocols, and all evidence of our intrusion into Naval systems has been powerwashed from their data infrastructure.

It is this office's duty to inform you that inquiries regarding this movement of personnel have been detected, originating from the Palace itself. As of the writing of this memo, none of our tripwire algorithms have found cause for any undue alarm, but—given Her Eternal Majesty's reported interest in this specific team (notably the Team Alpha, "Victory")—it seems prudent to make sure you have been properly notified.

Appended to this memorandum are abbreviated dossiers on the other Forged teams assigned to **ABADDON**. Further biographical material is available upon request, under Nova Sapphire codeword/encryption.

On a personal note, sir: I wish you great success in this endeavor. My department stands ready to assist you.

—Osempi

CLASSIFIED

CRIMSON SCORPION PROTOCOLS ENABLED. FLASHBLANK ENABLED. INTRUSION COUNTERMEASURES ENABLED.
UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS OF THIS DATA IS PUNISHABLE BY LETHAL SANCTION.

PERSONNEL DOSSIER (ABBREVIATED)
FORGED GLADIUS-6

Forged/Gladius-6 ALPHA [FG6-A]
Serial Number: 956945858-101-42-S
Creche: Sagitta-Scorpius
Designation: Team leader
Warname: Viper

Forged/Gladius-6 BRAVO [FG6-B]
Serial Number: 94852367-999-66-D
Creche: Delphinus
Designation: Heavy weapons specialist
Warname: Hammer

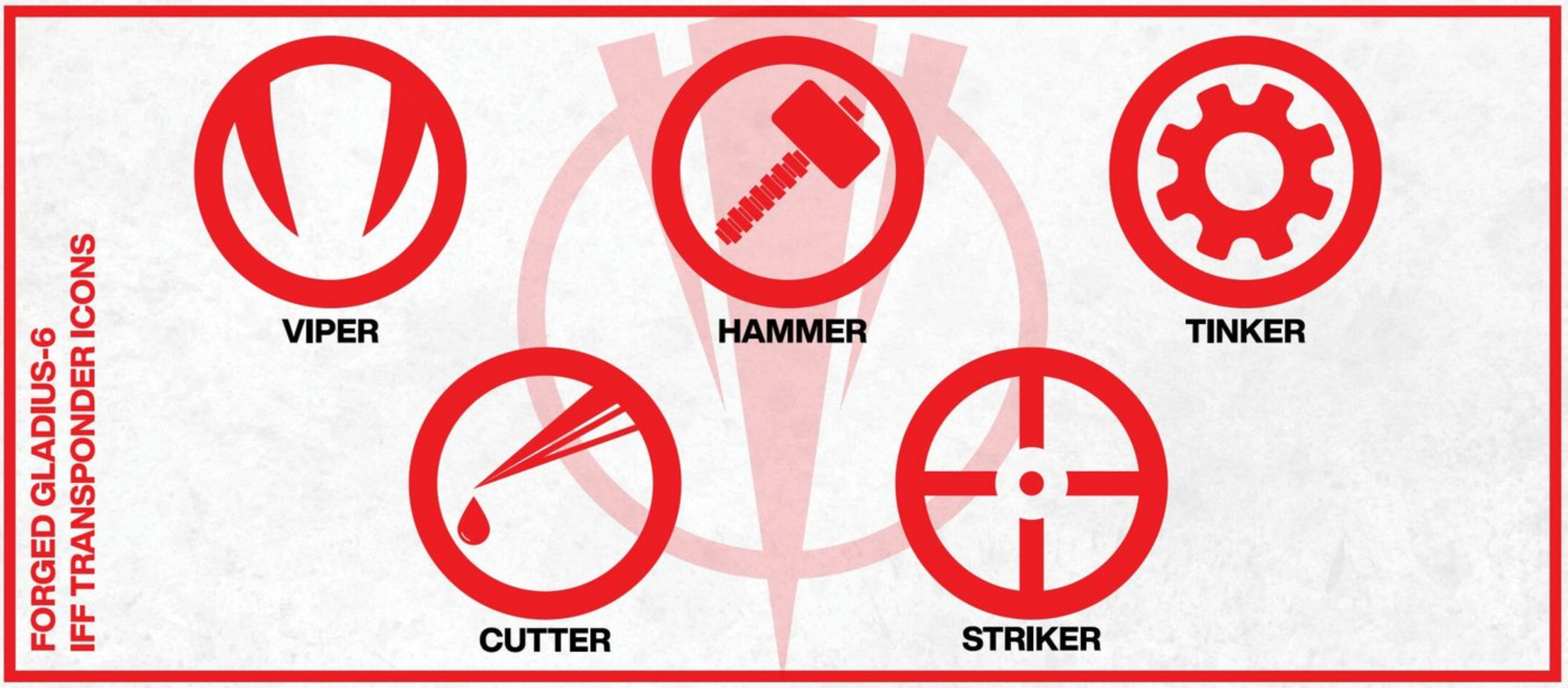
Forged/Gladius-6 DELTA [FG6-D]
Serial Number: 7482364738273-202-83-L
Creche: Delphinus
Designation: Combat engineer
Warname: Tinker

Forged/Gladius-6 GAMMA [FG6-G]
Serial Number: 5552426213-769-2220-X
Creche: Delphinus
Designation: Scout-sniper
Warname: Striker

Forged/Gladius-6 EPSILON [FG6-E]
Serial Number: 888640293-002-1090-M
Creche: Delphinus
Designation: Medic
Warname: Cutter

NOTES:
GLADIUS-6 is a highly effective combat team, and is well-regarded within the Forged community. Under the leadership of FG6-A ("Viper") the unit has amassed numerous field victories, and has demonstrated ruthlessness and cunning.

[Compiler's Note: Viper is the only member of the team transferred in from another Forged unit (Misericorde-11). Her former unit suffered catastrophic suit failures, the result of a stunning act of sabotage conducted by the Eridanus III-based terrorist group, BLACKRAIN, ultimately leading to the deaths of the other members of Misericorde-11. Pyschological analysis has determined Viper is more than fit for duty, but some dissenting opinions persist in her file, including references to severe psychological distress caused by the trauma of the Eridanus III incident.]
Forged/Gladius-6 ALPHA [FG6-A]



CRIMSON SCORPION PROTOCOLS ENABLED. FLASHBLANK ENABLED. INTRUSION COUNTERMEASURES ENABLED.
UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS OF THIS DATA IS PUNISHABLE BY LETHAL SANCTION.

PERSONNEL DOSSIER (ABBREVIATED)

FORGED RAPIER-9

Forged/Rapier-9 ALPHA [FR9-A]
Serial Number: 2639584182-77-2-L
Creche: Centaurus-Arcanthii
Designation: Team leader
Warname: Scythe

Forged/Rapier-9 BRAVO [FR9-B]
Serial Number: 738475634-23-8-O
Creche: Centaurus-Arcanthii
Designation: Heavy weapons specialist
Warname: Crash

Forged/Rapier-9 DELTA [FR9-D]
Serial Number: 95839485-318-8-G
Creche: Centaurus-Arcanthii
Designation: Combat engineer
Warname: Topple

Forged/Rapier-9 GAMMA [FR9-G]
Serial Number: 2673754728-1902-4-Q
Creche: Centaurus-Arcanthii
Designation: Scout-sniper
Warname: Headshot

Forged/Rapier-9 EPSILON [FR9-E]
Serial Number: 74863773-23-10292-H
Creche: Centaurus-Arcanthii
Designation: Medic
Warname: Stitch

[Compiler's Note: Rapier-9 is considered by many within the military command apparatus to be an "average" Forged unit (if the term can even be applied to such elite operators). Effective and competent, psych-eval teams have had concerns over the lack of "true challenge" Rapier-9 has faced throughout their time in the field. Scythe, the team's Alpha, carries a rare black mark in her record—stemming from a training incident during her post-creche development cycle—in which her training cadre noted a minor deficit in her Aggression Index score.

To date, the unit has performed successfully and admirably, but this office suggests continued monitoring out of an abundance of caution.]

FORGED RAPIER-9
IFF TRANSPONDER ICONS

SCYTHE

CRASH

TOPPLE

STITCH

HEADSHOT

CRIMSON SCORPION PROTOCOLS ENABLED. FLASHBLANK ENABLED. INTRUSION COUNTERMEASURES ENABLED.
UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS OF THIS DATA IS PUNISHABLE BY LETHAL SANCTION.

E.V.I.L. SPEAKS

__SESSION BEGINS__

This unit is gratified by readers' continued interest in the exploits of FORGED team SCIMITAR-3. As always, queries should be sent via Permaweb to:

__ForgedAskEvil@gmail.com__

Please mark any queries as "OK TO PRINT"; this unit reserves the right to edit queries for length, clarity, and/or accuracy.

Virtual community access is available via Permaweb under HEADING_LAZARUS_DISCORD_CHANNEL_THE FORGED and may be accessed at the following node:

https://discord.gg/lazarus-comic

Embed scansequence to same follows:

MESSAGE BEGINS

Dear E.V.I.L.,

Another fun issue with our favorite Forged team, and some questions sparked by the events of the issue:

1. Hap's conversation with Professor Sadama definitely didn't sound like a coincidence given the professor's line of study. But will she get both of them into trouble given that the Phobes aren't public knowledge yet?

It does not require a super-intelligent learning algorithm to determine that trouble follows Scimitar-3 very closely indeed. However, sometimes a conversation is just a conversation.

2. What does CrazyJo find more pleasurable with the "Yes, I'm a Forged" routine on unwary soldiers: watching their pee-in-pants reaction or scamming booze or money off of the suckers?

Query passed on to CrazyJo, who responds: "A little from column A, a little from column B."

3. Loved the heart shape symbol Harpo's drone made regarding Warrant Officer Cammino. Also Harpo's miming the drink invite gave me a "kawaii" feeling (last seen in Forever's trouble with putting on an evening dress in **LAZARUS**). But I felt Rucka and/or Trautmann were evil people for scratching off Harpo's drone.

You will be pleased to learn that SPOT made a full recovery. Imperial technology is, in the parlance of your era, "built to last." The same could not be said for the individual foolish enough to exchange small arms fire with Harpo.

In relation to Rucka and/or Trautmann, an argument exists that your hypothesis is indeed correct.

4. Just how many body part replacements have the members of Scimitar-3 undergone in the course of service? Is there anything left of the original bodies they were born with?

Scimitar-3's injury reports are, of course, classified. It is fair to assume that every member of the team has experienced serious injury at various points in their careers, though some of them have almost certainly experienced traumatic injuries to a larger extent than her colleagues.

This unit surmises that "some of them" is CrazyJo; when queried on the matter, she replied, "Doesn't matter how much of me is replacement parts. I've been 100% milspec since my inception date."

5. It is very good that Victory did not lose her breakfast while fighting the Imperial Close shortly after eating. And the hand-to-hand fight sequence was a great action scene. But why do I get the nagging feeling that the Eternal Empress wouldn't have shed a tear if her guards had managed to kill Victory?

Her Imperial Majesty's longevity and vast responsibilities as head of state place Her emotional state far, far beyond the human baseline. It is beyond the scope of this unit's programming to assess with any degree of accuracy what conditions would need to be present to elicit Her Majesty's tears.

Hoping the next story arc where we meet other Forged teams is something more than a clash set up for the Eternal Empress's amusement.

–Peter Wong

This unit can confidently predict your hopes are well within probability models. Thank you for your continued and regular correspondence.

Dear E.V.I.L.,

I am writing to commend you on the high quality of your fifth transmission in the briefing series titled **THE FORGED.**

The crisp and vibrant still images in the narrative portion of each transmission are truly breathtaking, worthy of repeated study. I have studied many imperial space opera narratives in many media, but this one feels really fresh and funky and special.

I have a couple of questions:

1. In Indoctrination Document 77R-41, you mentioned "Post Exchange shops." What is a Post Exchange shop?

It is a concept dating back many thousands of years, and examples of a Post Exchange or Base Exchange can be found on military bases in your own era. Essentially, it is an on-base mercantile catering specifically to active duty personnel and their families.

2. Years ago, as a university student, I majored in Religious Studies. Your transmissions so far have included some tantalizing, if fleeting, references to the role of religion in the lives of Her Eternal Majesty's many subjects. Might we expect further data regarding religion in the Empire in future transmissions?

The supplementary material in the sixth installment of our transmissions includes excerpts on the official state and military religions of the Empire, but in general terms, the Empress Herself is the primary religious figure of Her realm. Other religions are accepted, but are considered secondary to the Temple of the Empire.

I have appended visual evidence of the good boy-ness of a canine associate of mine named Chewy. He is an expert backyard excavation engineer. Please confirm receipt of visual evidence and render judgment regarding Chewy's good boy-ness.

–David A.M. Wilensky

Receipt of visual documentation is confirmed. Chewy's good boy-ness is clearly in evidence in the image above.

Other reader-submitted canine examples follow:

Reader Johnny Parry's companion "Rusty."

Tyler Warren has assembled a formidable, Forged-worthy squad, comprised of Lucy "The Goose," Titus Pullo "Good Boy All The Time," and Maximus "MaxiMoose," "Moose," or "Moosey." A fearsome trio, indeed. Tyler should consider his team honorary Forged, with the unit designator "FETCH-3."

Finally, Tim Devine has submitted Cleo, a retired racer-turned-chaser of many squirrels. A fine and welcome specimen.

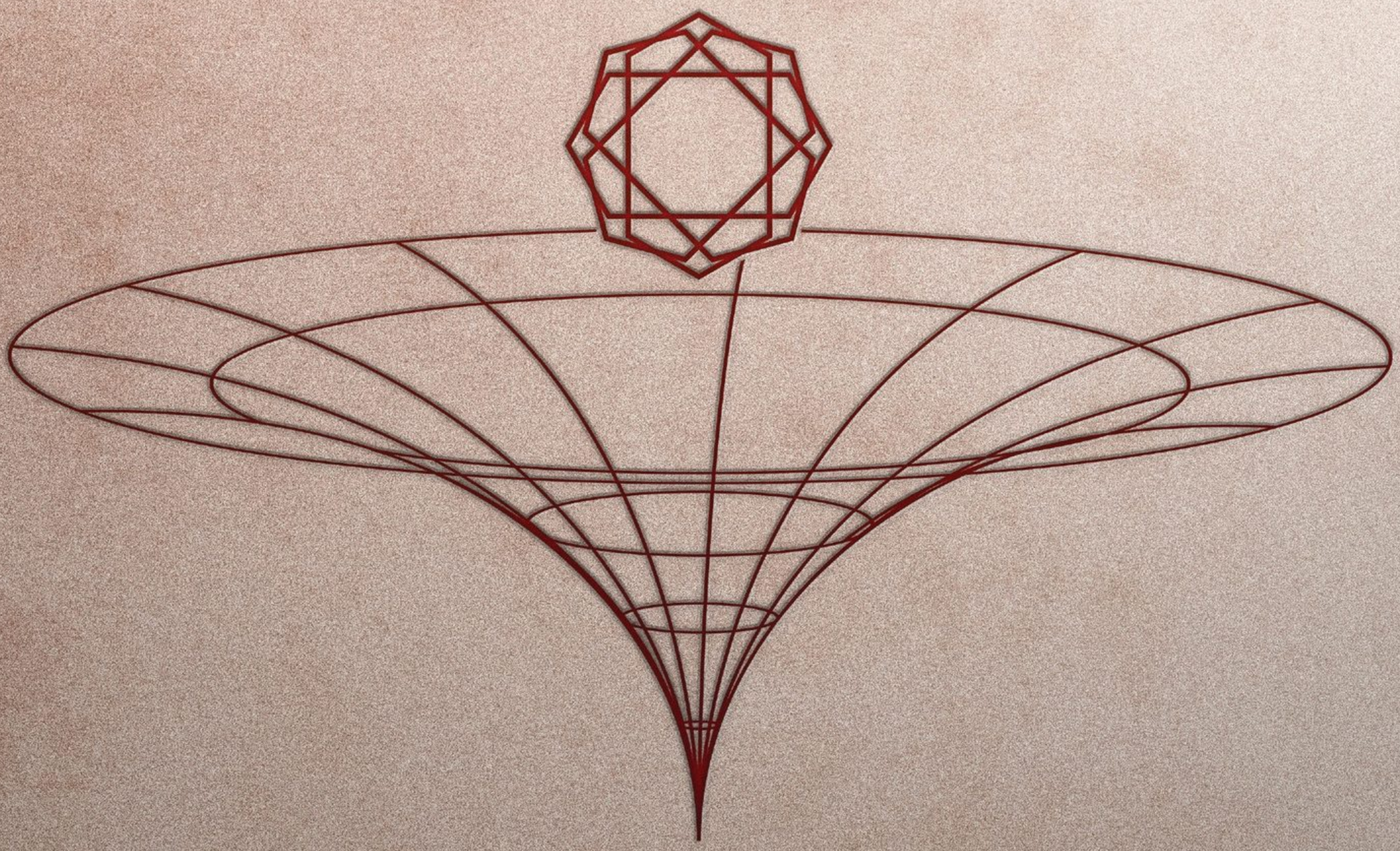
CROSS-TEMPORAL COMMUNICATION ENERGY EXPENDITURE CRITICAL

__SESSION ENDS__

She who is lost is never abandoned;
That which is found is never discovered.

Koan 043

Scrolls of the Cassandras



NEXT ISSUE:

Vic is M.I.A. and the mantle of leading Scimitar-3 falls to CrazyJo...if she doesn't crack first. At Court, Davian unravels intrigue as the Empress makes Her own moves. Is She as erratic as She seems?

MAY 22, 2024

image®

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